

# Spiritual Blessings



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The official journal of the Berean Bible Fellowship of Australia

## The Second Time

by C. H. Welch

**C**ONTRARY TO ALL human expectation, God is second, not first.

Saul is king before David. Moses is accepted the second time. Joseph is acknowledged the second time. Cain lives and Abel dies. Esau comes before Jacob; Ishmael before Isaac; Antichrist before Christ; the kingdoms of this world before the kingdom of the Lord.

The reason is simple. God is dealing with responsible moral creatures, and he teaches them through the exercise of their own choice and the experience of their own efforts. Had Adam never been allowed to exercise his choice, the human race would probably have been convinced that man could stand unassisted against all temptation.

Had Israel not failed so signally, man would doubtless have believed that it was within his power to accomplish a righteousness by works.



**2004 BBFA  
Conference  
Camp Toukley**  
*Registration Form  
enclosed*  
*for NSW, QLD & VIC readers*  
**RSVP 1st October**

Had government never been entrusted to man, the nations of the earth would never have been convinced that the only true king is the King appointed by heaven.  
*(extract taken from "The Berean Expositor Vol. 29, page 9)*

By creation, man is "the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11:7); but this image is, after all, "earthy."

"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.....as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."  
(1 Cor 15: 47-49)  
*(extract taken from "The Berean Expositor Vol. 29, page 203)*

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# The President's Word



Athol Walter

## Meetings

Come along and meet with us! All meetings (except annual conf.) are free. All welcome.

### **Brisbane:**

Alternate Sundays 10:00am  
Redbank Plains  
High School.

### **Study Weekend:**

June Long  
Weekend  
June 11-13, 2005  
(07) 3297 1981

### **Sydney:**

3rd Sunday  
of each month.  
Lunch 12:30am.  
Study 1:30pm.  
Community Hall  
104 Galston Rd  
Hornsby Hts.  
(02) 4996 4455

### **Newcastle:**

Every Monday.  
7:30pm  
34 Aroona St  
Edgeworth.  
(02) 4950 6708

### **BBFA Annual**

**Conference 2004**  
22nd, 23rd, 24th  
October 2004, at  
Camp Toukley. See  
page 12 and  
separate pamphlet  
for details.

**A** VERY PROFITABLE weekend was spent in Brisbane over the June long weekend with the like-minded brethren there. The fellowship was very warm, the studies honouring to the Lord and His Word, and questions and discussion showed attention to the themes and much thoughtfulness. It was heart-warming to meet new people and to know that all are growing in grace and in the knowledge of our great God and Saviour.

The Committee is presently concerned with arrangements for the annual conference at Toukley later in October. A registration and information brochure is included in this issue of the magazine. We expect improved conditions at the new venue, but we are being asked to provide definite numbers some little time before the camp. There is also a minimum number requirement, so we ask readers not only to come to the conference weekend, but to plan to stay overnight throughout the weekend, and please, please, send in your registration with at least a deposit by the due date.

The other project the committee has on at the moment is the revision and enlargement of our Hymnbook. The current book has served us well for eighteen years, but it has been felt for some time that we needed to enlarge our selection. The project is coming along very well, and the new book will be in use by the annual conference. The over-riding criteria have been firstly that the hymns and choruses chosen must glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and secondly that they must be dispensationally sound. We pray that this new book will be of even more help to us in our worship of God than the previous one has been.

We praise the Lord for His continual presence, guidance and daily help on our pilgrim paths.

Athol Walter.

PS The above was written some time ago, and unfortunately, for various reasons there have been delays in getting this issue out. But it does give me the opportunity to report that, very recently, three long-standing members of our Fellowship have fallen asleep in the Lord. They are Bob Davidson, Kath Plumbe and David Fryer.

Some memories of Bob appear on Pg. 7. He has been an active member and worker of our Fellowship since the early eighties and was largely influenced by Brian Kelson and the first visit to Australia of Mike Penny.

Dave Fryer has been with us for over 30 years, and as he has done throughout his Christian life, has been an energetic evangelist for the Lord Jesus and God's Word rightly divided. Due to the time and space restrictions we are faced with, our tribute to Dave will be included in the next issue of Spiritual Blessings.

Kath Plumbe was involved in the Berean group in Australia from its earliest days. Since that time, Kath has stood firmly for this Truth and has endeavoured in many ways to make all see what is the Dispensation of the Mystery. A tribute to Kath is included on Pg. 10.

The passing of these three members leaves a large gap both in the Fellowship and in our hearts. But we thank God for their influence, and rejoice knowing that their lives are hid with Christ in God and that when Christ, their life, appears, they shall appear with Him.

Athol Walter

# The Importance of the Bible to the Believer (Part 1)

by John Hutton



**T**HE BIBLE IS UNDER attack. Its importance to the general populace, when making moral and ethical decisions with regard to how society should act, is almost zero. This is probably to be expected, because as man learns more and more and is convinced that he is in control of his own destiny, God is acknowledged less and less and His laws are considered irrelevant, or “for a past day and age”.

Of more concern is the attitude of the ‘Church’ to God’s Word. Theologians and teachers are denying many of the basic doctrines of the Bible, and as a result, their ideas are being accepted by many of the members of Christendom. It is not fashionable to talk about sin and the need of a Saviour. Mankind is being told that if He acknowledges God in his life, then God will give him help and peace in his life. The virgin birth, the Deity of Christ, the existence of Satan, the truth of God being the creator, the inspiration of the Bible and many other fundamental doctrines are either not believed, or doubted, by believers as they are confronted by the teachings of those who they think or consider ‘should know’ and by the so called ‘indisputable facts of science’.

Albert Dalziel says in a hymn that he wrote,

*‘And in a world divided  
By selfishness and guile,  
When truth is on the scaffold  
And faith is standing trial...’.*

Truth is certainly on the scaffold but what is truth? John 17:17 tells



**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**

**That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

2 Timothy 3:16,17



us that God’s Word is ‘truth’. If we believe that then we have no where else to go if we really want to know what God has to say about Himself and His ways and His plans.

The purpose of this article is to have a simple look at what the Bible says about its importance to the believer, which may be of help to some in these testing times.

## The Bible reveals God

John 4:25 tells us that ‘God is Spirit’. The indefinite article ‘a’ is not in the Greek. It would be difficult enough to understand what ‘a spirit’ is, but we are presented with a bigger problem when He is said to be ‘spirit’. What is spirit? Anything at all that we might answer can only be from our imagination. In Col. 1:15 we read that God is invisible and John 1:18 says that ‘No man hath seen God at any time’. We can add to these statements that God, He is omnipresent (everywhere), omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all knowing) and immutable (unchanging). When we talk about God absolute, it is clearly outside of our human knowledge and experience to understand Him.

Many other statements are made in the Bible about God.

‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your

(continued on page 8)



# Crucified With Christ

by Athol Walter

*“For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.*

*Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”.*

*Rom 5:12 - 6:4*

In Matthew’s Gospel chapter 1, we are told that the coming birth of Mary’s son - to be called Jesus - would fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy about the virgin’s son whose name was Emmanuel. That name means “God with us.”

The Incarnation was, indeed, a miraculous event, and God became one with man. The Bible student will find, however, that there are several Greek words translated into English as “with”. The word used here is “meta”, which means to be associated with. As wonderful as the birth of Christ is, there is a further step necessary before a different Greek word for “with” can be used.

The virgin birth was the way in which Christ was born as a human, and yet escaped the fallen nature, the terrible result of Adam’s sin that is the lot of each of his descendants. The Lord Jesus Christ therefore, while human like us, was not like us in the sinfulness of the flesh. And that likeness also had to come about before we could be truly united with Him.

The other word translated “with” is the preposition SYN. This little word has the thought of union, or being joined with. We use it in English in words such as synchronise or sympathy.

The principle that God uses to make this final joining between Christ and ourselves is reckoning, or imputation. To put it into more Scriptural language, Christ, the righteous One, was reckoned guilty, so that we, the guilty, can be reckoned as righteous.

In my earlier years as a believer, I had a problem with this concept. I could not quite put my finger on what it was for some time, until one day a word popped into my mind. It was the word “pretend”,

which helped me articulate my problem

If I am only reckoned as righteous, does that mean I have only a pretend salvation? Are we only playing a sophisticated game of “Let’s pretend” when we talk about being justified, made acceptable in the Beloved, and no longer under the domination of sin? Are we kidding ourselves? Worse, is God kidding us? These were big questions to me.

I am sure now that the answer is NO.

The principle of reckoning is not God playing pretend games. What has taken place is based on sound, logical and legally recognized practices. In book-keeping and mathematics, to name just two areas, one thing is sometimes substituted for another, or reckoned as being something else. It is not just pretending, because once the reckoning is made, real and far-reaching transactions take place.

No believer needs to worry that God has swept sin under the carpet. He has not ignored sin. In Christ, He has dealt with all the problems of sin and the fall of man, and His remedy is real and effective. God’s use of the principle of reckoning is legal and just, and neither compromises His holiness, nor impairs our salvation.

There are several compound words using the preposition SYN which take us into this realm of reckoning, where complete union is made between Christ and those who believe. It is difficult to translate them into English properly, but the AV gives us such phrases as “died with”, “buried with”, “raised with”, and the one I want us to concentrate on, “crucified with”. A translation that more correctly shows the force of the Greek word, is “jointly crucified”, but to translate

all these compound words with “joint” or “jointly” results in strange sounds to English ears.

While there are quite a number of these compound words, jointly-crucified is one of only two that are used of anyone else but believers. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, the word “crucified with” is used of the thieves who were crucified at the same time as the Lord. (Matt. 27:44 and Mark 15:32) We understand, of course, that the word there does not carry any doctrinal significance.

Luke’s account, in 23:32 - 43, does not use jointly crucified, but he does record the conversation between the repentant thief and the Lord. It would appear that, in the time of his sufferings, the repentant thief saw more clearly than even the disciples, that here dying, in similar fashion to himself, was the sinless Son of God. He saw beyond the crown of thorns to the incomparable crown that is His as the King of Kings. And then he asked that he be remembered when the Lord came into His Kingdom. The translation should be, “When Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.”

And what a strange reply the Lord gives. The faith of the dying man is rewarded, but not in the way he asked. “Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in the Paradise.” Yes, it has the definite article.

What paradise is the Lord talking about? 2 Cor. 12:2-4 tells us that Paul was caught up into the third Heaven and paradise. “Caught up” can just as legitimately be “caught away”. In Gen. 1: 1, we have the first heaven and earth. In Gen.1:3 and Rev. 20:15, we have the second heaven and earth and in Rev. 21 & 22 we have the third heaven and earth. This is the period to which Paul was caught away, and it is the site of paradise. Apparently, the Lord could not say to the dying thief that he would be with Christ in His kingdom. But He could reward the faith of a dying sinner with the promise of Paradise.

Now, Paul is the only NT writer outside the Gospels to use the term “jointly crucified”, and his teaching on the subject can be summarised by two passages.

The first passage is Galatians 2:19 - 20.

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Paul sees himself as having been jointly crucified with Christ by faith. This death was called for by law, but now that it was carried out, the law lost its hold and retired from the scene. Its demands had been satisfied.

The second passage is from the section of Romans that deals with sin, rather than sins. Rom 6:6 - 7

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

Here it is not the law of Moses making the demands, but the law of sin and death operating in us. So we read in v. 6 of the old man crucified, the body of sin destroyed or made inoperative, in order that we should not serve sin.

The old man of Scripture is the fallen nature, the seat of sin within us from which flows the sins that stain our record. And note well, we are not told to crucify this old man. Rather, we are to look at the Cross through the eyes of faith, see Christ hanging there and becoming sin for us, and then we are to reckon our old man as having been crucified there with Him.

This is the point at which I had my cont.....pg. 10

*“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?”*

Rom 11: 33-34



# "Is This For YOU?"

When we read the Bible, it is important to look at the address on the letter.

In the Bible you find out who the letter was written to near the beginning of that letter. You can also tell who it is written to by the way it is written.

### What To Do:

- (1) Follow the paths below to find out where these letters from the Bible are going to.
- (2) Look up the verses in your Bible to see WHO will be getting each letter.
- (3) Write the names on the letters.

To:

To:

To:



To:



# A Tribute to Bob Davidson

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Robert Ian Davidson fell asleep in the Lord on 10th August. He had been struggling with his health for some years, having undergone several serious operations recently.

Bob has been associated with the BBFA for at least 20 years, in which time he has served the Fellowship in many ways, including serving on the committee.

Over the years he contributed a number of excellent articles to "Spiritual Blessings" magazine and presented many thought provoking Bible studies at various Christian gatherings, including the BBFA annual conferences. Two tributes from long-standing friends follow.

**John Kontos** from Greece shares his thoughts about Bob:

It is with deep regret I receive the news of the sudden death of our dear friend and brother in Christ, Bob. I was greatly saddened even though I knew of his ill health over the past few years.

He has always been an inspiration to me for his love for the Lord and his deep knowledge of the Scriptures which he searched with deep interest. He willingly shared his knowledge with others. It was through Bob that I came to have a deeper understanding of the Word and he was instrumental in my spiritual growth.

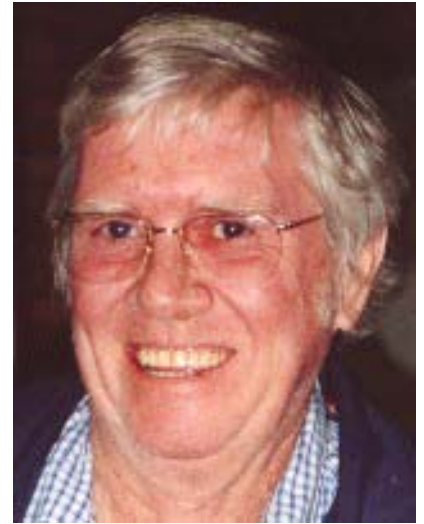
He was such an interesting person, full of love for knowledge. I recall the times when he was studying Egyptology and for many years, after his surgery work, he would drive to Sydney to attend Uni. He arranged trips to Egypt to study and learn hieroglyphics.

We spent endless hours together talking and discussing issues, and when I moved to Greece, we kept in contact. Just over a year ago, he paid us a visit and stayed with us for a week. We hardly went to sleep during this time, talking and sharing from the Scriptures. My last contact with him was a month ago when I called him and had a chat over the phone. He shouted quite well, even though he was still recovering from his recent operation. (John is quite deaf. Ed.)

I am certain that many will miss Bob, especially his close friends, who shared with him from the Scriptures at the Bible studies and other places.

I will always esteem him highly, value his friendship even after his death, and am sure that Bob has run the course, fought the fight and kept the faith. I am so grateful to the Lord for knowing him, he had such an impact in my life. I will certainly miss him and always remember him with brotherly love and adoration. He was a good mate, a true friend and a real brother in Christ.

John Kontos



A tribute from **David Tavender**:

Bob loved and honoured the Lord, and had the utmost regard for the authority of the Scriptures. He was a very intelligent man who had done some deep thinking about the Bible. He knew his Bible well, and had what can only be called an extensive knowledge of a number of Biblical topics.

A fraction of his work may be found on his web site, appropriately called "Find Out For Yourself" - [www.rianda.com.au](http://www.rianda.com.au)

Obviously, we are unsure of how long this web site will stay up and running, but it is highly recommended for all Bible students - especially those with an interest in Bible History, Archaeology and Chronology. Bob had attained a Masters degree in Egyptology and was a genuine authority on anything to do with Egypt in the Bible, or Old Testament history in general. I doubt I will ever meet anyone who will surpass Bob in their grasp of the Exodus account. His insights were always helpful and fascinating.

Bob was a really nice guy, too. His quiet, friendly manner (along with that slightly cheeky, rebellious side which surfaced occasionally) will be missed by many folks here in Australia. He was also a firm believer in resurrection, and I know that when Christ appears, Bob will appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4), whenever that day might be.

David Tavender

# The Importance of the Bible to the Believer

(cont. from page 3)

thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9).

“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor. 1:25).

‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?’ (Romans 11:33-34)

God is Spirit, invisible, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient with thoughts and wisdom that are higher than ours. Is it any wonder that Paul cries out, “Who hath known the mind of God?” Who can know anything about God? The answer is ‘no-one’ - unless God reveals things about Himself and tells us what His plans are.

The Bible is God’s revelation to man about Himself and His plan. There is no shortage of people who tell God what He should do, and how He should do it, and what His plans are, or should be, but if what these people say about God and his plans are not based on what God reveals about Himself in the Bible, then these things should be challenged or at least questioned.

Psalms 19:1-3 says, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge’, and that is true. The handywork of God is witnessed to by the heavens and His creation. But who is the God so revealed? From the evidence we have of ancient cultures we learn that nature and creation has told them there is a God, i.e. the sun or the forest or the ocean, but none of them have found the God of the Bible.

The first important thing for us to learn is that the Bible is God’s revelation - to us - about Himself. Without that revelation we can not know anything at all about God.

Another important point to realize is that God’s revelation about Himself has an end. The time came when it was finished.

“...the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was (has been - NIV) preached to every creature which is under heaven...(25) Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God (the Gospel) which is given to me for you, to fulfil (fill up) the word of God” (Colossians 1:23-25)

Verse 25 in the NIV reads:

‘I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness’.

Because these verses are translated so differently, a literal translation of the Greek is useful, ‘of which became I a minister according to the stewardship of God given to me for you to fulfill the Word of God.’ (Nestle).

It would seem that the dispensation of God given to Paul after Israel had been dismissed from the present purposes of God in Acts 28, fills up, or completes, the revelation of God to mankind. Many right and proper things have been written about God and His Word by godly and devout men over the centuries, but they are not Scripture. That fact should be a comfort to the believer because if Scripture, the God-breathed words of God are still being revealed then we are in trouble. Who has these new Scriptures? Every denomination and group claim to be doing things the right way, and believe the right things,

**“Who can know anything about God? The answer is ‘no-one’ - unless God reveals things about Himself and tells us what His plans are.”**

based on the writings of their founders and teachers.

As far as God is concerned He has revealed all that man needs to know about Him as far as this life is concerned. There isn't any more!

### **The Bible reveals God's plan**

The Bible begins with the words 'In the beginning'. God was beginning something. 1 Cor. 15:24 tells us that whatever was begun has an end. 'Then cometh the end when...'.  
Whatever had begun had a purpose and a timetable.

Whatever had begun had a purpose and a timetable.

'To the intent that now ...According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ (Eph. 3:10-11).

'But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman...' (Gal. 4:4).

God does things according to His eternal timetable. Christ was born at the appointed time, not by chance at that time, but at exactly the right time in the plan of God.

The Bible reveals God's plan of redemption as far as man is concerned, and His plan to prove His justice as far as the spiritual world is concerned.

A useful tool in Bible study is to apply the following question to whatever is being presented, "Does what is being presented, or the conclusion that we have made from our own study, rob God, or the Lord Jesus Christ, or the Bible, of any glory whatsoever"? If it does, then it must be wrong.

Here is an example. In Scripture, God is said to be the Creator. In the New Testament all creation is ascribed to Christ. If creation is denied by

***"It shall greatly help  
ye to understande  
Scripture, if thou mark  
not only what is  
spoken, or wrytten,  
but of whom, and to  
whom, with what words,  
at what time, where, to  
what intent, with what  
circumstance,  
considering what  
goeth before,  
and what followeth."  
(Miles Coverdale 1488-1568)***

science or religious persons then they must be wrong because Christ is robbed of glory, and one of His titles taken away.

### **The importance of words**

Words are by far the most important way that we communicate with each other and that God communicates with us. In our everyday lives, words are very important. When we enter into a contract with someone, it is wise to have the contract checked out by someone who is competent enough to tell us if the words used in the contract are to our disadvantage. We try to make sure that we will not

be hurt by the small print that is often not read and sometimes difficult to read.

If we are so careful about the words of man, how much more careful should we be with the words that God uses.

If we believe that the Bible is inspired by God then we should accept the statement about the words of God made in Psalm 12:6.

'The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times'.

The original languages of the Bible are mainly Hebrew and Greek and God has been very careful about the words that He has used. A good way to understand the meaning of a word used in the Bible is to see how the original word is used in other passages of Scripture. While there are some excellent language helps available and many commentaries written by godly and educated men, the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself.

(continued on page 11)

# Crucified With Christ

by Athol Walter

(continued from page 5)

problem in the past. So I reckon my old nature to be dead, knowing that I actually was not on the cross with Christ. What good is that to me now? My old nature is still with me, and the pull of sin can be strong.

It is not pretending, however. What the Lord did for me on the cross is real. When He died, the power of sin and death was broken. He proved that by rising from the dead. And even though I am still in this body that contains the old nature, I no longer must serve sin, as once I did. I now have a choice that was not mine before. Yes, I can choose to allow the old nature to dominate, or I can feed the new nature and serve God through it. And this is possible because I can legally reckon myself as jointly crucified with Christ.

Praise God.

## BIBLE STUDY TAPES AVAILABLE

Taped copies are kept of each Bible Study presented and can prove invaluable for personal home study and when sharing the Truth with others.

**These tapes are available  
for purchase for \$2.00 ea (AU\$) plus postage.**

A full list of subjects will be made available in future issues of Spiritual Blessings.

**Order by writing to the postal address listed on  
the back page or visit the website:  
[www.spiritualblessings.org.au](http://www.spiritualblessings.org.au)**

## A Tribute to Katharine Jane Plumbe

Our Fellowship lost another long-time member when Kath Plumbe fell asleep in Christ on 25th August this year. As a young child, Kath with her sisters and brothers, attended a home Sunday School run by a lady named Mrs Oldham. This lady and her husband had been readers of Dr Bullinger's magazine and through that, had come to know the writings of Charles Welch.

Through that Sunday School, Kath came to know George and Daisy Collier, who were instrumental in getting meetings going in and around Sydney to study Welch's work.

Throughout the years, Kath was a keen and active member of the group. She visited the Chapel of the Opened Book in London on overseas visits and established close links with the Dispensational groups there.

She took every opportunity that came her way to make all see what is the Dispensation of the Mystery, and was always looking for more ways to get the message out. On one occasion, she loaded her car up with Dispensational literature and travelled over a thousand kilometres up the NSW coast and into Queensland, calling on every Christian bookshop she could find.



Kath was an infants school teacher, rising to the position of Infants Mistress. She worked in a number of schools both in Sydney and country NSW.

Kath will long be remembered by those who knew her, not only for her energetic pursuit of ways to spread the Word, but also for her kind and generous nature. At her funeral, many of her nephews and nieces spoke lovingly of their aunty, and many friends and colleagues were there to say farewell and give thanks to God for her life. Kath was 83 years of age.

# The Importance of the Bible to the Believer

(continued from page 9)

Another help in understanding what is written in Scripture are the words of Miles Coverdale, a cleric in the time of King Henry VIII:

'It shall greatly helpe ye to understande Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken, or wyrtten, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstance, considering what goeth before, and what followeth'.

The words used in the KJV are old English words and the meanings have changed in many cases, sometimes greatly, and the words used by the modern versions do not always accurately translate the original languages. If they did, they would all agree and they do not.

## Is the Bible reliable?

It will be helpful to the reader if they read Acts 27:5-27, but here is a summary. Paul was under arrest and was on his way to Rome to appeal to Cæsar. Anxious to keep going on their voyage, the centurion and the master of the ship decided to go against the advice of Paul, which was that the voyage would end in disaster, and pushed on. At first it seemed a good decision, but things took a turn for the worse and they were caught in a great storm with a wind that they could not sail into. They had to let the wind 'drive' (verse 15) them wherever it chose. Things got worse, so much so that they undergirded the ship to help hold it together, lowered the sails and let the ship be 'driven' (verse 17) so that they had no control over its direction. Eventually the ship was lightened of its load and 'driven' (verse 27) by the wind up and down the coast for about a fortnight and the ship was finally wrecked.

Anyone who has done any sailing or boating will have an idea of what was happening on that voyage. A big wind becomes irresistible. Whatever you do, you cannot fight it and are at its mercy. In this way, many of the early sailing ships were

driven so far off course that new lands were discovered. Winds of that magnitude are irresistible.

The Greek word which is translated 'drive' and 'driven' is 'phero', and is also used in 2 Peter 1:21.

'Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along (moved - KJV) by the Holy Spirit' (2 Peter 1:20-21 - NIV).

The words 'carried along' translate the word 'phero'. The writers of the Old Testament did not write what they wanted to, they wrote as the irresistible force of the Holy Spirit moved them.

2 Peter 1:16-19 is worth taking notice of:

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For He received from the Father honour and

glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place..."

Peter says that he saw the Lord's majesty and heard the voice from heaven commending the Lord Jesus, but as wonderful as that 'experience' was, a more sure testimony to the truth are the words of Scripture. There is a lesson for us there. An experience that we might have may appear to be real and true, but if it does not add up when compared with the Bible then it is, at best, suspect.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul puts the words of 1 Peter another way:

'All scripture is given by inspiration (God breathed) of God...'

*Anxious to keep going on their voyage, the centurion and the master of the ship decided to go against the advice of Paul, that the voyage would end in disaster, and pushed on.*

(to be continued in the next issue)

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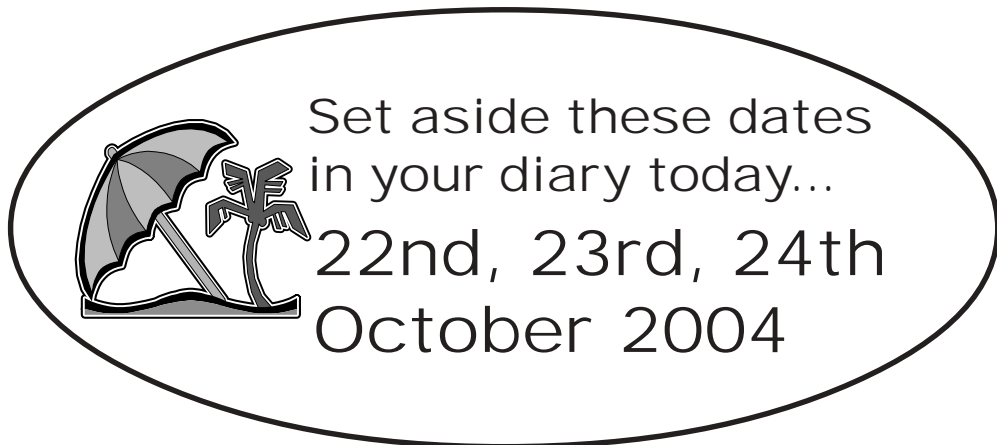
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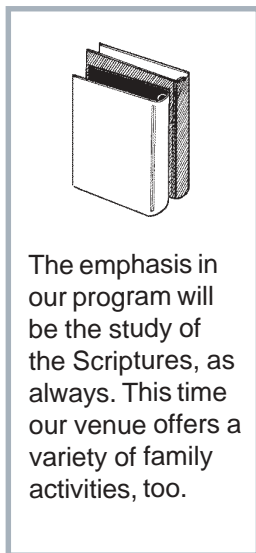
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